DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 282 CG 031 702

AUTHOR Dear, Joseph D.
TITLE Counseling in the Future.
PUB DATE 2002-05-00
NOTE 10p.; In: Building Stronger School Counseling Programs: Bringing Futuristic Approaches into the Present; see CG 031 688.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Counseling Effectiveness; *Counselor Role; Counselor Training; Elementary Secondary Education; *Futures (of Society); Outcomes of Education; *Pupil Personnel Services; *School Counseling; School Counselors; Student Leadership

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the future role of school counseling. It is noted that the student of the year 2021 should leave the K-12 system as an academically, socially, and psychologically balanced, civic-minded person ready to enter society and become a responsible, productive individual with basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and thinking critically, as well as competence in the use of computers and other emerging technologies. To improve the chances of the school system producing such a student, the future student service provider will need to learn to bring about a better relationship, agreement, and level of commitment among the learners, teachers, and the end users of the person being taught. The chapter includes a discussion of the future role of pupil service providers and the importance of student leadership in effecting change. (GCP)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 464 282

Counseling in the Future

By

Joseph D. Dear

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CG031702

Counseling in the Future

Joseph D. Dear

Schools and *everyone* associated with schools have a personal and moral obligation to be committed to carrying out the primary mission of the school and school district. The basic structure of existing school districts is not likely to change in the next 20 years. When students are assigned to attend school in a certain district, it is incumbent upon the district to accept that youngster unconditionally, for the most part, and to do everything within that team's power to educate the young person. Naturally, there are some exceptions in extreme cases, but generally speaking, school districts must accept the challenge they receive. A great variety of kids come to any school district. Some kids possess the most desirable characteristics of the ideal young person, whereas others come to the district with many shortcomings. The district is equally obligated to educate kids from both extremes of the desirability spectrum.

School is often the place where children have their closest contact with people from diverse backgrounds. Schools must be at the forefront of developing a multicultural attitude in children, especially in states such as California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Just as schools have special activities during American holidays, they can acknowledge and have special activities during holidays of people from different cultures. Changing demographics require different procedures in all aspects of the educational system. The student of the year 2021 should leave the K–12 system as an academically, socially, and psychologically balanced, civic-minded person ready to enter society and become a responsible, productive individual with basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and thinking critically, as well as competence in the use of computers and other emerging technologies.

To improve the chances of the school system producing such a student, the future pupil service provider will need to learn to bring about a better relationship, agreement, and level of commitment among the *learners, teachers,* and the *end users* of the person being taught.

The learners will need to bring to the table all the resources they have available, such as their natural skills and competencies; their experiences and other relevant personal attributes; the collective experiences and knowledge of their family, friends, peers, and mentors; their knowledge of other resources, such as those in the community; and an attitude of wanting to learn, to the extent possible.

The teachers will need to bring to the table all the resources they have available, such as their natural skills and competencies; their experiences and other relevant personal attributes; and resources from their department, school, district, and colleagues, including knowledge of other resources.

The end user will need to bring to the table all the resources that entity has available, such as its existing strengths, flexibility, sensitivity, access, and willingness to include, involve, accept and provide.

This concept can apply to the higher education system: For example, the learner as credential counselor candidate must bring to the table a positive attitude and commitment to carry out, to the best of his or her ability, the required schedule of competencies. The teacher as counselor educator must bring to the table a positive attitude and commitment to make use of all resources available through his or her personal experiences, colleagues, department, university, and the system as a whole. The end user, such as the school that employs the student support counselor, must provide an induction experience for that recently hired counselor to be welcomed and sufficiently oriented, mentored, coached, and gradually integrated into the school, beginning with a reasonable workload, assessment, and support for two to three years, enabling the counselor to intensely and continuously upgrade his or her skills throughout employment.

The same scenario would work for the K–12 student as learner, the K–12 teacher as teacher, and the potential employer as end user. For example, students would bring to the table the resources of family, friends, and peers, as well as knowledge of other resources. Teachers would bring the resources of their department, school, district, colleagues, and others of which they are aware. End users (colleges or universities, employers,

volunteer or quasi-volunteer organizations) would work at being flexible, sensitive, and willing to include and provide for that employee so that the individual can realize his or her full potential and be as productive and as "fulfilled" as possible.

The Role of Pupil Service Providers

The pupil service provider (PPS) would need the following skills, which are not currently (or sufficiently) required in most counselor education programs:

- computer skills and other skills in the use of technology
- cultural, linguistic, and academic development skills
- increased knowledge about and skills in handling integrated services and the concomitant knowledge of formulating joint agreements, relationships, and partnerships based on shared resources
- sufficient understanding of relationships, communication, conflicts, violence, self-esteem, and issues of equity
- practice of learned competencies *throughout* education and career
- sufficient skills in learning to bring about change in any existing system

Most educators who have been in the profession for a number of years know that where academic performance is high, relationships among students and staff are generally okay. Generally speaking, in schools where the vast majority of people genuinely care about one another and are committed to working together as a team toward a common educational goal, the educational quality is higher.

If this is an accurate and acceptable premise, then a major goal of schools might be to increase the number of participants who genuinely care about one another and are committed to working together as a team toward their school's stated educational mission. School districts throughout the United States are finding success through the effective utilization of the human resources available to them.

School counselors are primarily pupil advocates and partners with other educators, parents, and the community at large. Ultimately, their goal is to foster optimum teaching and learning conditions and to prevent school failure. They are the professionals in the school who are between the school administrators and the teachers. They are the "climate control"

of the school and the liaison with the community.

In addition to the academic challenges students must face at school, they encounter personal and social situations that impede their learning. Pupil service providers are (or should be) trained to serve as schools' experts in the two extremes of the human behavioral continuum. On the one end are such behaviors as motivation, self-esteem, personal growth, nurturing, positive reinforcement, and support; on the other end, crisis prevention and intervention, conflict management and mediation, problem solving and decision making, and the development of refusal skills.

With the agreement and support of colleagues, including other support staff, teachers, and administrators, support personnel could take a number of positive steps in schools:

- They could take the lead in initiating student forums, which involves an ongoing search for student leadership from all segments of the student body to do, among other things, such activities as promote student responsibility and initiate the establishment of campus chapters of strong academic, social, and civic groups, clubs, and organizations.
- They could initiate a mechanism that gives students training in communication skills.
- They could solicit assistance from other support staff and teachers to help students learn about the nature and extent of such things as good citizenship, relationships, communication, and so forth. For example, staff could implement a series of "what if" exercises, using video and role-playing techniques to examine common situations, such as a student making a joke about a serious subject.
- They could encourage interaction among different ethnic groups (supervised initially, if deemed necessary) through the various scheduled school forums and other student gatherings. This interaction could allow students a way to talk about what's going on at school without identifying themselves.
- They could initiate regular meetings of small staff teams to discuss positive ways of improving the school climate and relationships, encouraging potential positive or success-oriented situations, and addressing problem situations.
- They could initiate a system for identifying problem

students and staff and develop strategies to neutralize the impact of these students and staff on the smooth functioning of the school. Pupil service providers could work on ways to make these students and staff more productive and positive elements in the school environment.

- They could model appropriate and consistent responses to student behavior: Good behavior is encouraged and elicits positive consequences; bad behavior is discouraged and elicits negative consequences. This behavior policy oftentimes requires training and continuous communication with students and staff to make certain everyone knows the difference. Behavior that falls in the middle is continuously clarified.
- They could explore and document student expectations for use in the educational process. Likewise, they could explore and document teacher and other educator expectations of students in order to improve the educational process at every opportunity.
- They could continuously seek ways to engage students in work and other activities of interest to them. Undoubtedly, this requires getting to know something about the students and their interests.

Student Leadership

Some pupil services staffs have found ways to carry out their school's mission primarily by effectively using student resources. This is one source for suggested practices that is virtually untapped, yet it is an unlimited resource on every school campus—potentially the entire student body. Let's review a few facts:

Fact. Students listen to other students.

Fact. Young people join gangs and get involved with the wrong crowd because these gangs and other crowds fill needs: "loving" relationships, security, social outlet and acceptance, and on and on and on.

Fact. Peer pressure works.

Students need more good student role models. They need to see more people who look and speak like them doing things that matter. Students could take the leadership in matters of school harmony and safety. They are able to ask questions straight up and get straight up answers.

There are a number of students who are enthusiastic about learning and getting involved in school. Many already know that learning is a process, sometimes short, but sometimes long. We all probably know one or two students who don't give up at the first sight of defeat or failure but who keep on believing and trying. Well, with some support, they could teach others the same relatively simple concepts.

With the assistance of school staff, students could design and plan a strategy to "get to work" in their own schools. They could then work on identifying other student leaders and analyzing where the new recruit fits in the leadership training process—at the beginning, in the middle, or toward the end.

Students have not fully developed and accepted all the learned stereotypes, biases, and misconceptions of adulthood. They are still somewhat innocent and impressionable and therefore in a better position than are most adults to find problems in school systems and to develop solutions. Students need to start working on solutions for today's problems in preparation for the bigger and more challenging problems of tomorrow.

Creating Student Leaders

Students need to be recruited to help make schools functional. The heroes of the school should be the good and smart kids; the student body should look up to the good kids instead of the bad kids. Schools should plan strategies to make that the case.

Students should be identified first in every district, then in each and every school, to serve as "leaders with a purpose." They should be recruited, carefully, and trained to accomplish the following:

1. Develop a "picture" of the school, including all the significant elements that make up a school, such as attendance, grades, troublemakers, good and bad things going on, the school climate, who is respected and why, who is not respected and why, the movers and shakers of the school and why they have that influence, and so forth.
2. Recruit other potential leaders.
3. Identify other students' weaknesses and strengths.
4. Teach other students to solve problems and mediate differences; develop their own self-esteem and assist others with developing self-esteem.

5. Develop their own, and assist others with developing, personal and social responsibility.

Students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels should be identified to serve in this capacity—with an eye to continuously expand the number of leaders at every grade level. Students at each level would learn specific leadership skills:

Elementary: become aware of and learn to observe other students and the school environment; learn terminology and basic elementary ideas and concepts related to leadership, responsibility, and respect.

Middle/junior high school: become "shadows" of experienced leaders; learn more advanced ideas and concepts related to leadership, responsibility, and respect; participate in low-level training and experiences that lead to more advanced participation in the school and in leadership.

High school: beginning in freshman year, learn and experience the above ideas and concepts and begin training others to be leaders.

Pupil Service Providers: Leading the Leaders

Ultimately, counselors and other support staff of 2021 should not only work hard to acquire certain skills and competencies, but they should also work toward assisting students to acquire the same competencies. Among those coveted qualities are leadership, mentorship, organization, and advocacy:

Leadership: Demonstrate leadership and show others how to be a leader and how to follow a leader.

Mentorship: Demonstrate being a mentor to someone; demonstrate receiving support from a mentor; show others how to do both.

Organization: Demonstrate personal organization and show others how to be better organized.

Advocacy: Become a model advocate for students, staff, and the community; show others how to be an advocate to others.

Even though educators and American corporate executives have known the key to successful operations and projects for years, it took the Japanese automobile industry to drive the point home several years ago. A company works best when everyone associated with it has become personally committed to carrying out the company's primary mission. That same concept works for schools, too. Teachers, students, bus drivers, administrators, counselors, parents, psychologists, custodians, secretaries, social

workers, librarians, cafeteria workers, and everyone else at a school must work together as a team for the betterment of their school. I don't think this is a new concept in education.

About the Author

Joseph D. Dear, Ed.D. has served as state coordinator of all 64 pupil personnel services training programs in California for the state's Credentialing Commission since 1989. He facilitated the 25-member advisory panel that wrote California's new counselor standards, which are being implemented between 2001 and 2003. He has been a counselor educator, newspaper editor, TV program host and producer, Upward Bound director and private consultant. He has published major reports and articles on the topics of school violence, counseling and substance abuse in the Black community. Dr. Dear completed his B.A. in psychology, M.S. in community mental health and Ed.D. in counselor education, all at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.